ARA #3 PT

CAR - Please draft reply for TJ's signature. Thru ARA 2/21.

P. O. Box 15157
San Francisco, CA 94115

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20 January 1977

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY _____ DATE _____
EXDIS or XDIS EXT. DATE _____
TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____
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Assistant Secretary
Inter-American Affairs Bureau
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Sir:

It is with some concern that I call your attention to what I have learned quite reliably to be a serious instance of unwarranted interference and abuse of authority within the U. S. Department of State in the affairs of a sovereign nation. I refer specifically to actions taken to exert influence on behalf of one of the parties in a custody dispute that is being handled through official legal channels of the country of Guyana.

All of the parties in the dispute are Americans. One of them (upon whose behalf there was direct interference from within the State Department), a Mr. Timothy Stoen, conducted himself in front of Guyana officials in such a manner as to reflect that they did not know how to handle their affairs, and that he could not trust anything they would do in the matter. (This matter involves his wife's child, who was abandoned by both of them to the third party in the dispute, Rev. Jim Jones, who is the child's natural father, several years ago). There is absolutely no reason for the United States to take any position on the matter, official or unofficial, and to do so constitutes an insult to the nation that is handling the matter within its proper jurisdiction, implying that it is not itself capable of doing so.

It is precisely this kind of meddling or pressure tactics that have, in the past, contributed to the distrust of not only Guyanese, but people of many small nations vis à vis the United States. The idea that a private citizen of the United States, who is having some sort of dispute with another person, can bend the machinery of State to his own personal ends, should be cause for alarm, since it creates the distinct possibility of subverting whatever constructive diplomatic efforts that may be underway towards building good relations. Particularly so in the case of Guyana, where a great deal of mistrust for the United States has been evident, reaching a high point with the Cubana Airlines disaster of a couple of years ago, where 73 young Cuban and Guyanese professionals perished in an explosion that has been widely attributed to a US-financed saboteur.

Since that time, and thanks to the constructive efforts of President Carter, Ambassador Young, and other in the U.S. government, relations between the United States and progressive Caribbean nations such as Guyana have been improving. We have

even heard that Guyana, while accepting a substantial loan for development from the United States, has turned down aid from the USSR, a sign that Guyana, though following a socialist course, certainly need not become part of the Soviet sphere of influence. Now, quite obviously, the application of pressure by an individual or individuals within the State Department to control the course of a private matter is not going to help this state of affairs: indeed, it can very easily harm them, and may possibly already have done so.

I should also like to point out that the organization which Rev. Jim Jones heads, Peoples Temple, has been developing a large mission/community in Guyana which has been a great success, and has made outstanding contributions to the development of the region where it is located, extending vital medical services. In fact, the Peoples Temple project has to a significant degree helped to dispel a lot of anti-American feeling in Guyana by showing the constructive, practical and helpful aspects of Americans, rather than the "ugly" aspects that have created a stereotype that the U.S. has found hard to overcome.

In any case, any interference on the part of the State Department or any other U. S. agency is regrettable, and should be immediately stopped. I am aware that it is very difficult to be able to control this kind of thing in such a vast department. But, as I think you are aware, it can be through seemingly trivial matters like these, taking place perhaps on lower levels of the 'bureaucracy' where they are not very easily noticed, that incidents with serious ramifications can take place.

Your attention to this incident would, then, be most deeply appreciated, in the interests of US-Guyana (and, by extension, US-Caribbean and third world) relations.

Sincerely yours,

Richard D. Tropp

cc. to: Guyana Desk, U.S. State Department
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
Rep. John Burton
Rep. Phillip Burton
Hon. Willie Brown
Hon. Andrew Young
Vice-President Mondale
President Carter

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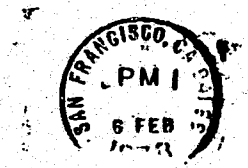

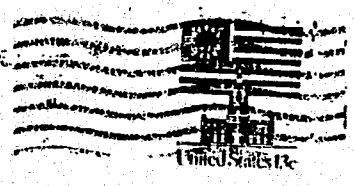

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